

WHAT TO DO AFTER AN ASTHMA ATTACK

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN PRESCRIBED ORAL STEROIDS



**ASTHMA
AUSTRALIA**

This checklist is designed to help you manage your asthma after an attack where you needed oral steroids. By following these steps, you can minimise future attacks and reduce the need for further oral steroid treatments.

SEE MY USUAL DOCTOR (GENERAL PRACTITIONER)

WHY?

Book in to see your usual doctor as soon as possible (ideally face-to-face)

- Within a week or as soon as possible
- Then again after 1-2 months

To make sure your asthma attack has stopped flaring-up after your course of oral steroids. Your doctor may then adjust your treatment and Asthma Action Plan to keep you safe from future asthma attacks.

QUESTIONS TO ASK MY DOCTOR ABOUT MY TREATMENT

WHY?

- Am I using my preventer and reliever correctly?
- Are my inhalers the best devices for me?
- How do I step up my asthma treatment when I feel a flare-up coming on?
- Is my preventer the right dose for me at the moment?
- Can a specialist offer me alternative treatments to prevent asthma attacks?
- Could I benefit from a different asthma treatment routine? (such as Maintenance and Reliever Therapy or an Anti-Inflammatory Reliever?)
- How can we address my comorbidities?

To help optimise your asthma treatment and reduce the risk of needing more oral steroids

WHAT RISK FACTORS CAN I ACT ON?

WHY?

- Smoking or vaping
- Hay fever
- Vaccination against respiratory infections
- Healthy body weight, regular exercise and healthy diet
- Other conditions such as breathing pattern disorders that may be affecting my asthma
- Something else in my home, at work, or environment: _____

By taking steps to reduce the impact of these risk factors, you can reduce your chance of asthma attacks and needing another course of oral steroids

CHECK MY LIFETIME LOAD OF ORAL STEROIDS WITH MY DOCTOR

WHY?

- I've had ___ courses of oral steroids in my lifetime
- See overleaf for the risks of repeat oral steroids

To minimise your long-term risk of serious side-effects from repeat oral steroid use

**SMARTER
ORAL
STEROIDS**



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ORAL STEROIDS



**ASTHMA
AUSTRALIA**

Oral steroids are important medicines used to reduce swelling (inflammation) and stop asthma attacks. They're also used for many other health concerns like allergies, croup and autoimmune, eye or skin conditions.

HOW LONG WILL I NEED TO TAKE THEM?

For an asthma attack, adults might be prescribed oral steroids for around 5-7 days. If you've been prescribed them for longer, make sure you know exactly when to stop. You usually only need to lower the dose slowly (taper) if you've been taking oral steroids for more than two weeks.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

While taking oral steroids short-term, you might notice some side effects such as:

- Mood changes
- Sleep disturbance
- Changes in appetite
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Stomach bloating or irritation
- Diarrhoea or constipation

Tell your doctor if you notice any of these and they worry you.

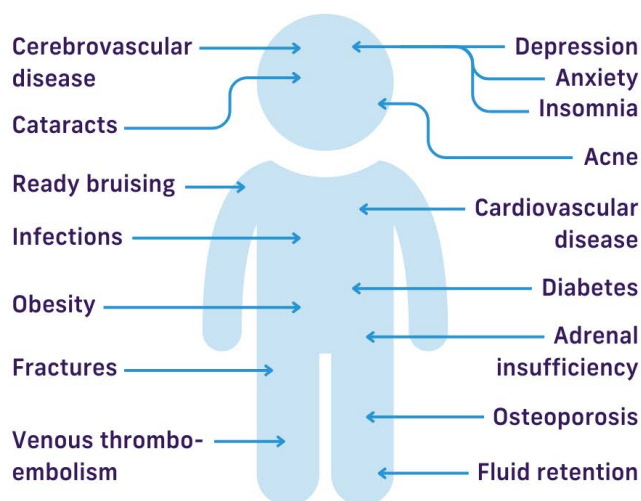
LONG-TERM RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS

If you've needed more than four courses of rescue oral steroids in your life (with a total of 1000mg or more), you are at a higher risk of more serious long-term side effects as shown in the diagram.

Your doctor may need to start monitoring your blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol and bone density if you are over this threshold.

For a full list of potential side-effects, read the Consumer Medicine Information leaflet for your specific medicine.

Talk to your doctor about your long-term risk and how to manage your asthma so you don't need oral steroids as often. Your doctor will support you with a self-management plan to help prevent future asthma attacks.



Harmful effects of oral corticosteroids in asthma are common and widespread and affect all organ systems.

We all want to breathe freely and avoid asthma attacks.

Have the conversation with your doctor about the risks and benefits of oral steroids.